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Emerging Threats to United States National Security

The Honorable Jesse Helms
United States Senator



JESSE HELMS was born in Monroe, North Carolina, and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. After the war, he became the city editor of *The Raleigh Times*, and later, Director of News and Programs for the Tobacco Radio Network and radio station WRAL in Raleigh. After serving as an assistant to two United States Senators and Executive Director of the North Carolina Bankers Association, he ran successfully for the U.S. Senate in 1972. Currently serving his fifth and final term, he is former chairman, now ranking Republican member, of the Committee on Foreign Relations. Senator Helms is the recipient of many awards, including the Gold Medal of Merit from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Guardian of Small Business Award from the National Federation of Independent Business. Married to the former Dorothy Jane Coble of Raleigh, he has three children and seven grandchildren.

The following is an abridged version of Senator Helms' speech at the second annual Hillsdale College Churchill Dinner, held at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C., on December 5, 2001.

America is the only nation in history founded on an idea: the proposition that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. No other nation can make such a claim. This is what makes us unique. It is why, for more than two centuries, America has been a beacon of liberty for all who aspire to live in freedom. It is also why America was so brutally attacked on September 11.

The terrorists who struck the Pentagon and the World Trade Towers despise what America stands for: freedom, religious toleration and individual liberty. They hate the success with which the American idea has spread around the world. And they want to terrorize us into retreat and inaction, so that we will be afraid to defend freedom abroad and live as free people at home. They will not succeed.

A Revived Sense of Vigilance

THE TERRORISTS we fight today are not the first aggressors of their kind to challenge us. Indeed, at this moment of trial, it is altogether fitting that we gather to honor the memory of Sir Winston Churchill, whose courage, conviction and steely resolve led the Allies to victory over Fascism, and who went on then to warn us about the danger of the emerging Communist threat and the Iron Curtain then descending across Europe. Today we face a new and different enemy — one who hides in caves, and who strikes in new and unexpected ways. Yet in a larger respect, this new enemy is no different from the enemy Churchill faced 60 years ago. And as shocking as September 11 was, it should have come as no surprise that our nation was once again challenged by aggressors bent on her destruction.

Jefferson warned that “the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” And since our founding, Jefferson has been proven right time and time again. New enemies have constantly emerged to

threaten us. The lesson of history is that to secure our liberty, America must be constantly on guard, preparing to defend our nation against tomorrow's adversaries even as we vanquish the enemies of today.

Over the past decade, America let down her guard. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, our leaders assumed that the post-Cold War world would be one of unlimited peace and prosperity, and that our greatest security challenges would be invading Haiti, or stopping wars in places like Bosnia and Kosovo. The Clinton people slashed our defense budget in search of a "peace dividend," while sending our forces all over the world on a plethora of missions that drained America's military readiness. They put off investments needed to prepare for the real emerging threats to U.S. national security. Instead of focusing on new dangers, they spent their time and energy forging ridiculous new treaties — like the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court — while fighting desperately to preserve antiquated ones, like the ABM Treaty!

In light of America's new war, it is almost humorous to look back on some of the foreign policy debates of the 1990s. Can anyone imagine Kofi Annan today declaring, as he did two years ago, that the United Nations Security Council is the "sole source of legitimacy for the use of force in the world"? Or former Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott repeating his ridiculous assertion that all countries, "no matter how permanent or even sacred [they] may seem," are in fact "artificial and temporary?"

"Within the next hundred years," Talbott went on to say, "nationhood as we know it will be obsolete; all states will recognize a single global authority." Let him tell that to the policemen and firemen at the World Trade Towers. Let him tell it to all the millions of Americans flying flags from their homes and cars. Let him tell it to the thousands of brave Americans in uniform, who at this very moment are voluntarily risking their lives to defend our country.

In the wake of September 11, a measure of sanity has been restored to debates over U.S. foreign policy. Awakened to new dangers, our challenge is now twofold: First, we must win the war on terrorism that took our nation by surprise. And second, we must prepare now for the threats that could emerge to surprise us in the decades ahead.

Beyond Afghanistan

THANKS TO the outstanding leadership of President Bush, the Taliban is in retreat and Osama bin-Laden is on the run. But the war on

terrorism is far from over. Indeed, one could argue that the most difficult challenge comes now, as the Afghan campaign moves from the taking of cities, to a cave-by-cave hunt for bin-Laden and his terrorist network. Ripping that network out by its roots will be long, difficult and dangerous work. Moreover, President Bush's greatest challenge may come *after* the Afghan phase of the war is over.

The bin-Laden terrorist network operates in dozens of countries. Nor is it the only one that threatens America and her allies. Terrorist networks operate across the world, with the support of dozens of states. President Bush has made clear that this war will not end until every terrorist network with global reach is decisively defeated. He has also made clear that the United States will no longer tolerate states that support or provide safe haven to these terrorists. That means, I am convinced, that the war on terrorism cannot and will not end until Saddam Hussein suffers the same fate as the Taliban.

While we do not yet know that Saddam was directly involved with the tragic events of September 11, there is a mountain of evidence linking him to international terrorism generally, and to bin-Laden's terrorist network specifically. We know for a fact that Saddam attempted to assassinate former President Bush. We know with certainty that he has chemical and biological agents, and is pursuing nuclear weapons. We know for certain that, days before coming to the U.S., one of the September 11 hijackers met with an Iraqi agent in Prague — and that soon after that meeting, this same bin-Laden operative was in the United States inquiring how one goes about renting a crop-duster. So the obvious next step in the war on terrorism is the elimination of Saddam Hussein's tyrannical terrorist regime.

Just as the United States teamed up with determined Afghans who were ready, willing and able to overthrow the Taliban with American support, there are Iraqis ready to overthrow Saddam. But taking the war to Saddam will be no easy task. We must accept the probability that many of the nations rallying around us today will be nowhere to be found. Indeed, some are likely to scream and yell and stomp their feet, demanding "evidence" of Iraq's involvement in the September 11 attacks. It is then that President Bush must patiently remind them that the war on terrorism is a war against *all* terrorists who threaten America, regardless of whether they bombed the World Trade Towers, sought to murder a former President of the United States, or

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threaten our people with nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction.

We must proceed against Saddam with the same resolve with which we have proceeded against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Once the world sees *two* terrorist regimes in rubble, I suspect that support for international terrorism will dry up pretty quickly. Dictators will begin to understand that waging a war by proxy against the United States carries deadly consequences.

While we prosecute the war on terrorism to its logical conclusion, we must, at the same time, begin preparing for the *next* threats to America — threats which could be quite different from those we face today. The next challenge we face may come from a rogue state armed with ballistic missiles capable of reaching New York or Los Angeles. It may come from cyber-terrorists who seek to cripple our nation and our economy by attacking our vital information networks. It may come from a country that has developed small “killer satellites” capable of attacking our space infrastructure, on which both our defense and our economy depend. Or it may come from a traditional, state-on-state war, such as a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. In any event, it is essential that we begin preparing *now* for *all* of these possibilities, by developing defenses against a wide range of asymmetric threats.

Distinguishing Friends and Enemies

WE MUST also look realistically at who our potential adversaries could be in the decades ahead. For example, Communist China — a nation with no respect for human rights, for religious freedom, or for the rule of law — remains both a present and an emerging threat to the United States. Its annual double-digit increases in military spending, its virulent anti-American propaganda, and its aggressive arms acquisitions are all very clear indications that China fully intends to become a superpower — and, when it is able, to seek regional hegemony in Asia and threaten our democratic friends on Taiwan. Moreover, China has for years exported dangerous missile technology to Pakistan — support that, according to the Director of Central Intelligence, continues today unabated. China has also supplied chemical weapons-related equipment and technology to Iran. And earlier this year, U.S. and British war planes had to destroy fiber-optic cables that had been laid by Chinese firms in Iraq, as part of Saddam Hussein’s ever-improving air defense infrastructure.

Today, China is a thorn in our side. We must make sure that, as China rises, it does not become a dagger at our throat. Nor is China by any means the only nation that could one day threaten us. Countries like Iran, Syria, Sudan, North Korea and Cuba continue to provide aid, comfort and refuge to terrorist elements that wish to harm the United States, and several of them are seeking weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them.

In times of war, the enemy of our enemy is often our friend. During World War II, Churchill explained his wartime alliance with Stalin this way: “If Hitler invaded Hell,” Churchill said, “I would make at least a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons.” But let us not forget what happened in the *aftermath* of World War II, when the Soviet Union went from wartime ally to Cold War adversary. We must be careful that, in our zeal to build the coalition against terrorism, we do not mistakenly turn a blind eye to the true nature of certain regimes whose long-term interests and intentions remain contrary to ours.

Of course we must, and should, take the opportunity to reach out to nations that are willing to step up and take concrete steps to help us in the fight against terror. Not for several generations has the geo-political map of the world been so in flux, as a variety of countries decide how to respond to the events of September 11 and to President Bush’s ultimatum that “either you are with *us* or you are with the terrorists.” President Bush is certainly to be commended for the rapid transformation of our relationship with Russia, whose long-term interests clearly lie with the West. President Putin seems to have seized September 11 as an opportunity to align Russia more closely with the United States, and he should be encouraged in this regard. But we must proceed with care. For example: The idea of giving Russia a decision-making role within NATO — including a veto over certain Alliance decisions (as NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson suggested the other day) — is absurd. Russia still has much to prove before being given *de facto* membership in the Atlantic Alliance.

We must make clear — as President Bush has made clear — that we want closer cooperation with Russia and a new relationship that puts Cold War animosities behind us. But in building that relationship, we must stand firmly behind our intention to build and deploy ballistic missile defenses. If the United States and Russia are to establish a

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new strategic relationship based on trust, cooperation, and mutual interests, then Russia must recognize that such missile defenses, in protecting the United States and our allies from mutual adversaries, will enhance the security of both nations in today's new and dangerous world.

**Moral Foundations
of Security**

AMERICA IS indeed the greatest nation on the face of the earth, a beacon of freedom for the entire world. We have met tremendous challenges to our freedom before September 11 and defeated them. We will do so again. But in the long run, the greatest emerging threat to America may not come from without, but rather from within. As I have said often during my years in public life, we will not long survive as a nation unless and until

we restore the moral and spiritual principles that made America great in the first place.

On September 11, 4,000 innocent Americans were killed by a foreign enemy. The American people responded with shock, sadness, and a deep and righteous anger — and rightly so. Yet let us not forget that *every passing day* in our country almost 4,000 innocent Americans are killed at the hands of so-called doctors, who rip those little ones from their mothers' wombs. These are the most innocent Americans of all — small, helpless, defenseless babies. For *unborn* Americans, every day is September 11.

America was attacked by terrorists on September 11 because of what America stands for — our dedication to life, liberty and justice under God. As we defend those principles abroad, let us also renew them here at home. As we go

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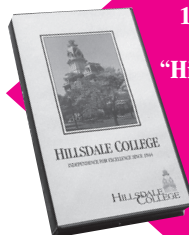
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after the terrorists who committed those unspeakable acts against our people, let us, at the same time, get about the task of restoring our nation's moral and spiritual foundations. No matter how successfully we prosecute the war against terrorism — no matter how brilliantly we prepare for the threats of the future — we will *never* be truly secure if we do not return to the principles on which America was founded, and which made America great.

This is already taking place. In the wake of September 11, flags are flying and church pews are overflowing. This great patriotic and spiritual outpouring is proof that the terrorists' plans have backfired. They thought that their attacks would frighten and divide us; instead they have

drawn us closer to God — and to each other. We must encourage this spiritual rebirth, and nurture it so that it becomes another Great Awakening. We must instill in our young people an understanding that theirs is a nation founded by providence to serve as a shining city on a hill — a light to the nations, spreading the good news of God's gift of human freedom.

Thank you, God bless you, and, as Ronald Reagan always said, *God bless America!* 

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